

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:624
ANSWERED ON:21.05.2012
MANAGEMENT OF FOREST LAND
Hegde Shri Anant Kumar;Roy Shri Arjun

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) the extent of participation of local administration in the management of forest land at present;
- (b) whether suggestions have been received from various quarters to empower gram sabhas, village councils and panchayats in the management of forest projects and assign mandatory powers of approval in respect of diversion of forest land for non-forest activities pertaining to developmental projects;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the other steps taken or being taken by the Government to ensure a more meaningful participation of the local people in the management of forest land?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

- (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 624 due for reply on 21.05.2012 regarding Management of Forest Land raised by Shri Arjun Ray and Shri Anant Kumar Hegde.

(a) Participation of local bodies in management of forest land is done under Joint Forest Management (JFM) wherein following the principle of care and share, Joint Forest Management Committees comprising of local people protect, conserve and manage the forest sustainably in return for usufructs and predetermined share from harvesting operations.

(b) & (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministry has received suggestions from various quarters to empower Gram Sabhas, village councils and panchayats in management of forest projects. An advisory has been issued by the Ministry to all States/UTs vide D.O. No. 1-50/MOS(I/C)E&F/10 dated 29th October, 2010 to all Chief Ministers to take suitable action so that JFM Committee functions under the overall guidance of Gram Sabha, is recognized as organs of Gram Sabha and inter-alia functions as Standing Committee of Gram Sabha. For diversion of forest land for non-forestry activities including development projects, prior approval of Central Government is required under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Final approval for diversion of forest land under this Act is given after receipt of written consent of the concerned Gram Sabha for such diversions.

(d) For effective and meaningful participation of local people in forestry activities, the Ministry is providing funds to JFM Committees under different schemes for implementation of various activities such as afforestation, protection and conservation of forests, awareness creation etc. which includes funds for training and capacity building of these Committees.